

Amendments to the Specification:

[0196] A suitable method and apparatus for loading penetrating members has been described previously in commonly assigned, copending U.S. patent applications ~~Attorney Docket 38187-2589~~ US 60/393,706 filed 7/1/02 and ~~38187-2590~~ US 60/393,707 filed 7/1/02 , and are included here by reference for all purposes. Suitable devices for engaging the penetrating members and for removing protective materials associated with the penetrating member cavity are described in commonly assigned, copending U.S. patent applications ~~Attorney Docket 38187-2601~~ US 60/422,988 filed 11/1/02 and ~~38187-2602~~ US 60/424,429 filed 11/6/02 , and are included here by reference for all purposes. For example in the embodiment of Figure 78, the foil or seal layer 820 may cover the cavity by extending across the cavity along a top surface 890 and down along the angled surface 892 to provide a sealed, sterile environment for the penetrating member and analyte detecting members therein. A piercing element described in U.S. patent applications ~~Attorney Docket 38187-2602~~ US 60/424,429 filed 11/6/02 has a piercing element and then a shaped portion behind the element which pushes the foil to the sides of the cavity or other position so that the penetrating member 802 may be actuated and body fluid may flow into the cavity.